



Fact Sheet

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control • www.scdhec.gov

Cryptosporidiosis

What Is <i>Cryptosporidiosis</i>	<i>Cryptosporidiosis</i> (krip-toe-spo-rid-e-o-sis), is a diarrheal disease caused by a microscopic parasite, <i>cryptosporidium parvum</i> . It can live in the intestine of humans and animals and is passed in the stool of an infected person or animal. During the past two decades, Crypto has become recognized as one of the most common causes of waterborne disease in humans in the United States. The parasite is found in every region of the United States and throughout the world. . Both the disease and the parasite are also known as "Crypto."
What are the symptoms?	Symptoms include diarrhea, loose or watery stool, stomach cramps, upset stomach, and a slight fever. Some people have no symptoms. Symptoms generally begin 2-10 days after being infected.
How is <i>Cryptosporidiosis</i> treated?	There is no effective treatment. Most people will recover on their own. If you have diarrhea, drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. Antidiarrheal medicine may help slow down diarrhea, but consult with your doctor before taking it.
<i>How do people catch this disease?</i>	<p>Crypto lives in the intestine of infected humans or animals. You can become infected after accidentally swallowing the parasite. Crypto may be found in soil, food, water, or surfaces that have been contaminated with the feces from infected humans or animals. Crypto is not spread by contact with blood. Crypto can be spread:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By putting something in your mouth or accidentally swallowing something that has come in contact with the stool of a person or animal infected with Crypto. • By swallowing recreational water contaminated with Crypto. Recreational water is water in swimming pools, hot tubs, jacuzzis, fountains, lakes, rivers, springs, ponds, or streams that can be contaminated with sewage or feces from humans or animals. Crypto is chlorine resistant and can live for days in pools. • By eating uncooked food contaminated with Crypto. Thoroughly wash with uncontaminated water all vegetables and fruits you plan to eat raw. • By accidentally swallowing Crypto picked up from surfaces (such as toys, bathroom fixtures, changing tables, diaper pails) contaminated with stool from an infected person.
<i>What can be done to stop the spread of this disease?</i>	<p>Washing your hands with soap and water after using the toilet, changing diapers, and before eating or preparing food is the best way to stop the spread of Crypto.</p> <p>Avoid water that might be contaminated. Avoid swallowing recreational water. Avoid drinking untreated water from shallow wells, lakes, rivers, springs, ponds, and streams. Avoid using ice or drinking untreated water when traveling in countries where the water supply might be unsafe.</p> <p>Avoid swimming in recreational water (pools, hot tubs, lakes or rivers, the ocean, etc.) if you have Crypto, and for at least 2 weeks after diarrhea stops. You can pass Crypto in your stool and contaminate water for several weeks after your symptoms have ended. Crypto is chlorine resistant and can live for days in pools.</p> <p>To decrease your risk, avoid fecal exposure during sex.</p> <p>Wash and/or peel all raw vegetables and fruits before eating. Use treated water to wash all food that is to be eaten raw. Avoid eating uncooked foods when traveling in countries with minimal water treatment and sanitation systems.</p>

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

Region 7

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Public Health Office • 4050 Bridge View Drive • Suite 600 • N. Charleston, SC 29405 • Phone: (843) 746-3800 • www.scdhec.gov